

EUROPE'S
LEADING MX
MAGAZINE



Jeffrey Herlings Red Bull
Factory Rider

TRAVELLING SCOTSMEN
SHAUN SIMPSON
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GRAND PRIX OF QATAR AND THAILAND

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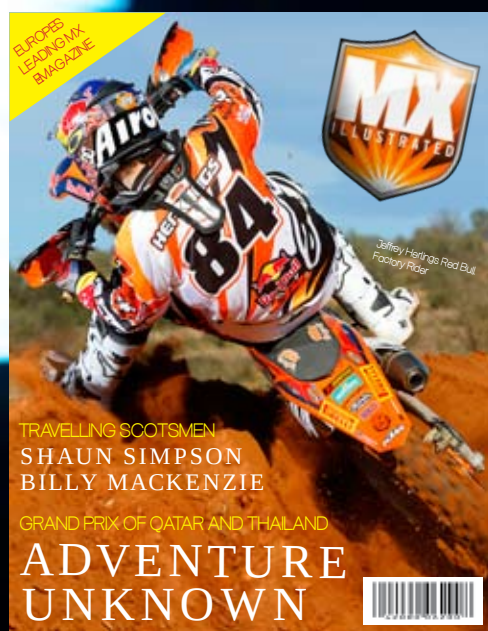
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FIM WORLD MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP INTO THE UNKNOWN QATAR AND THAILAND

STORY BY GEOFF MEYER IMAGES BY KTM

Never in the history of the sport of Motocross has an event given so many unknowns. A new country, a new circuit, racing at night, MX1 and MX2 combined in a Superfinal. The Grand Prix of Qatar is something more than we could ever imagined.







Amazingly one of the most interesting aspects of the opening round of the FIM World Motocross Championships might just see two defending World Champions going head to head. Unlike in any previous World Championship opener World MX1 Champion Antonio Cairoli and World MX2 Champion Jeffrey Herlings will begin on the same starting gate and both will be going for victory.

Cairoli who finished the 2012 season with 16 moto wins in a row is the heavy favourite to add World Motocross Championship number seven in 2013. Already in second place in the all time winners list, with only Stefan Everts ahead of him it is clear that Italian is looking for more records in 2013 and after his end of season domination the question mark is will he want to continue to totally control his competition. The Italian will begin his 2013 sea-

son racing in the International Italian Championships a series he hasn't been able to control like in his World Championship career. Last year it was Steven Frossard who beat Cairoli. Herlings on the other hand has already said he wants to race with Cairoli and the other MX1 riders in the opening round in Qatar, when the two classes are combined. Herlings has often



shown the same speed as the bigger 450cc machines in recent years, clocking lap times comparable or better than Cairoli, but obviously design and dirt in Qatar will decide how competitive the smaller MX2 machines will be.

Racing at night will be all about being careful in the unknown condition and the bigger 450cc machine might find the going tough, while the smaller nimble 250cc bikes

could have an advantage. Youthstream have already mentioned they will try and make the circuits an even playing field for the two different classes, so what we get in Qatar will be interesting.

Of course it won't just be the Italian and the Dutchmen who have a shot at winning in Qatar. Leading MX1 riders Gautier Paulin, Ken De Dycker, Max Nagl, Steven Frossard, Clement

Desalle, Kevin Strijbos, Tommy Searle, Jeremy Van Horebeek and Joel Roelants will all want a piece of Cairoli and Herlings, and all have Grand Prix victories to their names.

Whatever happens when the lights go on in Doha, Qatar on March 1 and 2 for the Qatar GP, you can be sure that the whole World will be watching the MX1 and MX2 combined.





MXGP TIMETABLE

Friday 01/03/2013

MX2 Free Practice 17:00 --17:35

MX1 Free Practice 17:45 --18:20

MX2 Pre--Qualifying Practice 19:15 --19:45

MX1 Pre--Qualifying Practice 20:00 --20:30

MX2 Qualifying Race (20min. 2laps) 22:00

MX1 Qualifying Race (20min. 2laps) 23:00

Saturday 02/03/2013

MX2 Warm--up 17:00 --17:20

MX1 Warm--up 17:30 --17:50

MX2 Grand Prix Race1 (35min. 2laps)
19:10

MX1 Grand Prix Race1 (35min. 2laps)
20:10

MX1/2 Last Chance Race

Start of the Race (20min. +2laps) 21:30

MX1/2 SUPERFINAL

Start of the Race (35min. +2laps) 23:10

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Photos: Tagliani S., Archer R.

HAT TRICK FOR TONY CAIROLI! **TRICAIROLI**

Red Bull KTM's Italian factory rider Tony Cairoli takes his third consecutive MX1 World Championship title for KTM. The six-times Motocross Champion has won around half of all the races in 2012 on his KTM 350 SX-F and has taken more than 80 percent of the available points – GRANDE TONY!



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JEFFREY HERLINGS MX2 WORLD CHAMPION! ORANJE

The young Dutch rider from the Red Bull KTM Factory Racing Team celebrates his first senior World Championship title in 2012. Following Tyla Rattray in 2008, Marvin Musquin in 2009 and 2010 and Ken Roczen in 2011, Herlings is the fifth rider in a row to take the MX2 World title with the KTM 250 SX-F!



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1. GP OF QATAR
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2. GP OF THAILAND
SI RACHA - 10/03/2013



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TRADITIONAL MOTOCROSS MUST SAVE **GIUSEPPE LUONGO** **WE MUST SAVE OLD SCHOOL CIRCUITS**

STORY GEOFF MEYER IMAGES RAY ARCHER

Youthstream President Giuseppe Luongo knows that with the environmental push by the greenies that Motocross as we have known it for years might have a short time frame if you remain holding all our events within Europe. While we see more rounds of the FIM World Motocross Championship heading to places like Qatar, Thailand, India, Brazil, you can be sure that the Youthstream president is also looking to help the sport survive in Europe.

Motocross Illustrated: We always have a large number of old school circuits on the calendar, but of course places like Namur are being taken away from us because of the environmental movement. What can we do to save these old school circuits?

Luongo: Our goal is to save as many of the classic Motocross tracks as possible, same as what we have done with Maggiora in Italy. A partner of ours bought all the land around the circuit, and it is close to Milan, close to the airports and hotels, but saving this circuit is very important to Youthstream. Maggiora will have a good paddock, good media facilities, and good access to hotels, airports and most importantly it will have a classic old school Motocross track. This is our dream, but unfortunately we cannot reach this dream everywhere.

As you mentioned the greenies are coming and making it difficult to keep many of our old school tracks. So for this we need to prepare for the future. We want to save as many as possible in good areas for hotels and airports, but where we don't succeed this we need to go to Road Racing facilities, or into stadiums. But when I talk about stadiums I talk about Motocross tracks, not Supercross tracks. We want to bring Motocross into the stadiums. Motocross people are not Supercross people. Motocross is a lifestyle and we need to keep that.

Motocross Illustrated: Because of the environmental push, is the future of the sport then outside Europe, or a good portion of the rounds? Maybe with maybe 50% of the races held in Europe?

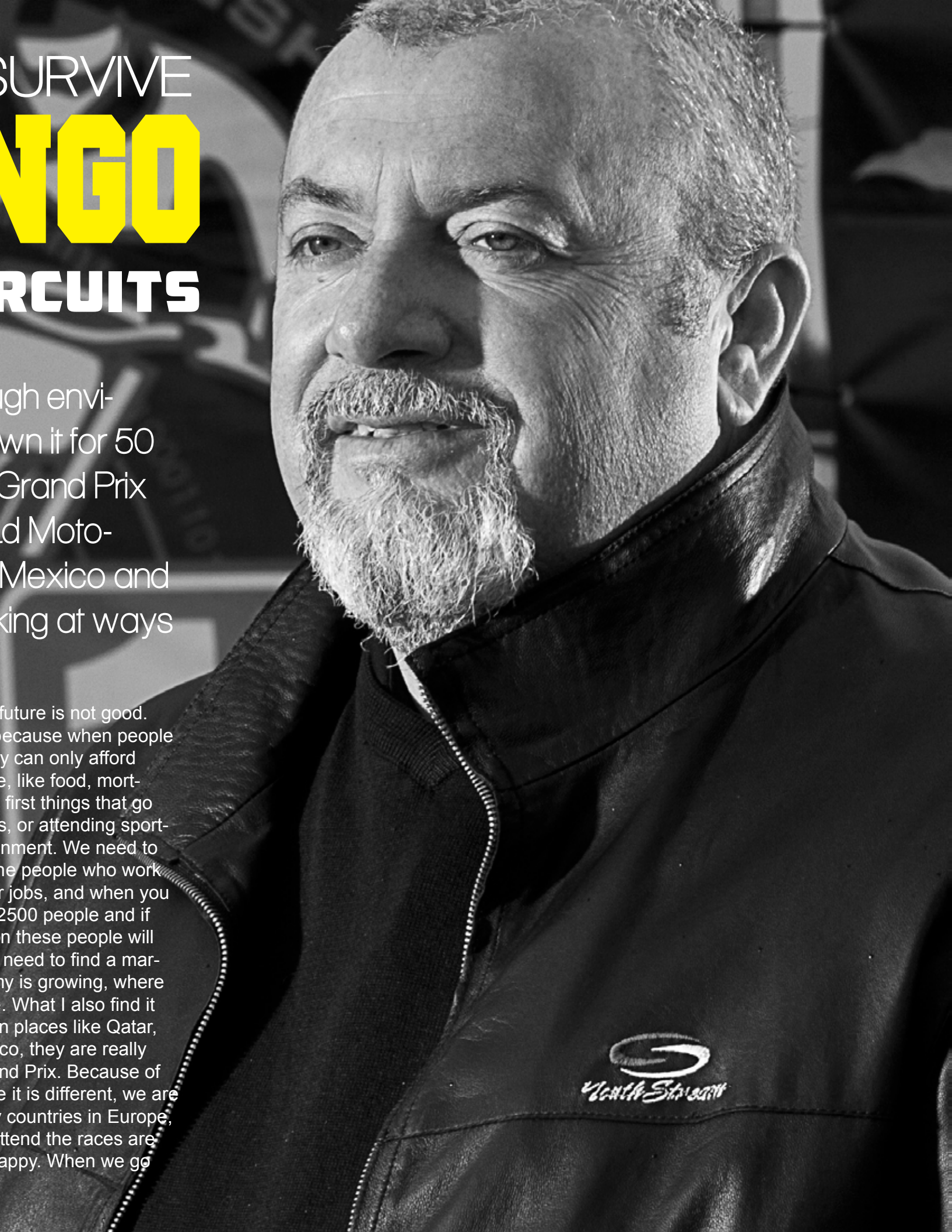
Luongo: For me, it is very complicated and very easy at the same time. In Europe we know well, and it isn't a new story, things

are not good and the... The sport will suffer, but we don't have money the things they need in life, like a house, a car, a mortgage, and cloths. There are things like hobbies, like going to events, or entertainment. We need to find a solution so all the people in this sport keep their jobs. If we see the paddock it is 20% of the people we don't find a solution all lose their jobs. We need to find a market where the economy is stable. If the economy is stable that these organizations in Thailand, Brazil, Mexico are excited to have a Grand Prix. The situation in Europe is losing money in many places and the people who are also sometimes not happy.

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A black and white portrait of a middle-aged man with a goatee, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark racing jacket with a visible zipper. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a race track or pit area.


Gulf Stream

to these countries outside Europe they are so happy to see us. Now we are dealing with other countries like Indonesia, India and Argentina, and these people are excited to have the FIM World Motocross Championships. They want a Grand Prix and a new sport in their country. We have to go to the places where the people want to invest in us, for the riders, for the teams, for the mechanics, the media. We need to find fresh money, because if we stay just in Europe we have to cut the cost as much as 50%, so that means we would have to cut 50% of the people who work in the GP's.

Motocross Illustrated: How much are you looking forward to the opening round of this year's FIM World Motocross Championships?

Luongo: I am very excited, because I think it is something exceptional, I mean Qatar has many things for the first time, the first time we have a Grand Prix in the Middle East, the first time we have a night GP and also the first time the MX1 and MX2 rider's race together. I think these three things make this GP really unique. I think many good things will come out of this.

Motocross Illustrated: I visited Dubai with my family back in 2012 and was amazed at the amount of wealth and how well everything was organized there. You visited Qatar recently, what is your opinion of that region?

Luongo: I am just back from Qatar and I know the professional work they do there with the circuit, with the federation, for sure it is going to be a really big event. These people make the MotoGP now for 11 years and they know how to make an event really impressive. Also the accommodation for the people in the paddock, the media centre the restaurant, the hotels, everything is really impressive.

Motocross Illustrated: What can you tell me about the circuit?

Luongo: The track we have built together with the organizers is very, very nice. It is going to be something great. We also work closely with the president of the Federation there to have worldwide television not only for Qatar, but for all the rounds of the FIM World Motocross Championship. I think everything will be really good there. It is complicated what it is like. We try and make so many circuits different as possible and that is what makes the FIM World Motocross Championships special, because we try and race on many continents and also on





different types of circuits, be it deep sand or hard pack or clay, or soft dirt, we try and give the riders a good challenge in different conditions. We have all the soil from the area of the track, we have sand, we have clay, and we have dirt. The jumps are of course very stable and we have areas where we can have a really good Motocross track. The track is a little of everything. Obviously where the jumps and more technical sections are harder. We work to make this unique and special for the series.

Motocross Illustrated: Having watched MotoGP in Qatar there doesn't seem to be a lot of spectator attendance. I can imagine that this event will be mainly for television. How important is this for the worldwide television you have organized?

Luongo: For sure television is important, the sport, the teams and the organization they live more from the television coverage than the fans at the races, the fans at the races are important in Europe because they cover the cost of the organizers, but in an event like this in Qatar the television is very important and we are working very hard to create something with television that will take the sport to many more people, and not just the regular Motocross fan. I think we might have a good surprise, because in the Middle East there are many people riding Motocross bikes. They all ride in the dunes and I think we might be surprised by the spectator attendance. Off road activity is very big in this area.

Motocross Illustrated: Obviously the lighting will be important; can you tell me anything about this?

Luongo: The lighting we will not be permanent this year, we put the lights on the track and they know we need to make the lighting good because we can't have any shadow, so the light towers have to be at different highs to restrict shadow. These people also do the lighting for the MotoGP and they have some problems there with the lights reflecting on the circuit on the tarmac. Obviously these people are good at what they do and the lighting will be perfect, they are very professional. Next year we make the lighting permanent, this year we need to develop it...

Motocross Illustrated: Qatar is a long term plan?

Luongo: Yes, this is a long term plan, the fu-

ture is to establish the Motocross Grand Prix in Qatar, but because of the relationships we have made from this event, there is another country in the middle east that also want to run a Grand Prix, so that is very exciting for the future.

Motocross Illustrated: I know the older I get the more I dislike travel. I also like to spend more time with my family and I guess you being a similar age to me you must have similar ideals?

Luongo: The people think sometimes that I am crazy because I was always going all over the place for my work, but you know I am over 50 years old and I want to stay home with my family now, I want to travel less, for me I prefer the events are close to home, but I have a responsibility to make sure the sport continues to grow and make sure people in the sport keep their jobs.

Motocross Illustrated: What advantage does our sport have to survive in tough times?

Luongo: The advantage of our sport is it isn't an expensive sport when you compare to Formula One or MotoGP, or the other major sports. For the organizers in these countries you need to have a million euro to make a Formula One track, to make a track in our sport you need maybe two million euro. The fee for Formula One is maybe 50 times bigger than our fee, so for these organizers in other countries, in places like Qatar or Thailand or Brazil; it is much cheaper to have our events. Also if you go to any country in the World people ride Motocross, our sport is very accessible. Other motor-sports don't have that.

Motocross Illustrated: The change to the format has caused some negative comments on the forums and in the media. Of course there are also positive comments. How do you see the general opinion of people?

Luongo: When you do something new, everybody has different opinions. For sure it can not only be good, for this we will listen and watch about the critics and also in the development of this new way we might have to modify some things, to make it better. We are also open for





change. Because we will travel more outside Europe we need to reduce the cost for the teams and the organizer. The teams need much more money and they can get that from the media. You don't always have a good sponsor because you have a good team, you need television coverage. That is the future and for this we need to make the sport more attractive for the television and media. With this new format we have all riders get two motos, of 35 minutes and two laps. For the hardcore fans like you and me they still get the two races in each class, but for the television, the major channels they do not want to show four hours of Motocross. Sure many of the channels that now show it can show four hours, but the worldwide channels do not want that. To make our sport grow we need those channels, as well as the channels we have now. If we want to go to the bigger channels they never give four hours, they also want it live; they don't want a replay of the races. So we will have the format for everyone. The riders get two motos each, but we also have this Super-final for television, and we have everything concentrated on that, a one hour show which will attract the major television channels. It is one thing going to a sponsor and saying I have motors and another thing telling a sponsor you have CBS.

Motocross Illustrated: Will the regular Motocross fans still get to see most of the FIM World Motocross Championship races on some type of television or on the internet?

Luongo: So we will continue to broadcast what we do now with the whole GP program, but we will also offer the bigger channels, the channels we had for the 2012 Motocross of Nations. We now go to Qatar and Thailand and Brazil and Mexico and soon in India; we can show them we have a bigger worldwide television. Motocross is not Formula One or MotoGP, our sport is not in the same value as that sport, our sport is much smaller, but if we can attract the extra television, worldwide television, and live then that will make a very positive change for everyone involved in the sport.



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FIM MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONS

Antonio Cairoli - MX1 | Jeffrey Herlings - MX2



SHAUN SIMPSON

AN OLD SCHOOL GUY IN THE NEW WORLD

IMAGES BY RAY ARCHER STORY BY GEOFF MEYER

Scottish rider Shaun Simpson has been around the Grand Prix scene a while now. Ridden for some of the leading teams in the Grand Prix paddock from the Red Bull KTM Factory team, to Monster Energy Yamaha and now with the TM Factory. At just 24 years old age Simpson is a young man looking for that piece of luck that will place him back where he was in 2008 and 2009 when he looked likely to be Great Britain's next World Motocross Champion.

Motocross Illustrated: Shaun, I have always seen you as a pretty easy going, simple type of guy. Not somebody who stands out in a crowd, but people probably like because of your quiet and friendly nature. Who is Shaun Simpson?

Simpson: I think Shaun Simpson is more of an old school type of guy, am not up to date with the latest fashions, or music or event television stuff. I don't have the latest mobile or computer and I am not the best at tweeter or that type of thing. I just go about my day and try and be the best I can be. They way I have been brought up is pretty much to be down to earth, respect your elders and the people who have helped you. I don't take my work for granted or anything like that and I see it as a job. Maybe that is more the way my dad does things. We drive to a lot of the races and that is something a lot of people don't do. I think I respect what goes into getting the bikes there or the drive involved from the team and mechanics. Sometimes I know too much and maybe if I knew less I could focus on the job at hand, but I wouldn't change anything.

Motocross Illustrated: I come from a pretty warm family, parents who really made sure my

childhood was normal, but as a father I am in a broken family and I see with my kids that means they have to be tougher than I was as a kid. You come from a warm, loving family. Do you think that makes you a little soft as a person, compared to maybe people who come out of unhappy childhoods and need to fight a little more for their bread and butter?

Simpson: I wouldn't say soft, that is probably the wrong word. I mean my parents have been behind me all the way, and without them I wouldn't be here today, no question about that, even at the moment if it wasn't for my mum and dad it would be difficult, even now. Living in Scotland getting even to the South of England is tough, never mind doing Grand Prixs, but of course I have had to move away to Belgium, but with my family so supportive they have made loads of sacrifices to make it happen for me. At times you can feel that, and that makes it tough sometimes, because I know what they have given up for me and if the results are not coming I feel like I am letting them down, while that is not the case. I wouldn't say I am soft, because I do a lot of stuff myself and I could manage it alone, but that isn't the way I want to do it and it isn't the





way I see it working in the future. I like how it is and appreciate their support.

Motocross Illustrated: If you look at some of the most recent riders who are successful they tend to be a little selfish. Are you selfish enough to be a World Motocross Champion?

Simpson: Maybe with a different upbringing you can be more selfish, I mean I am always trying to make sure everyone is happy and forget about myself. I mean some of the others guys have had a selfish upbringing and they don't mind pissing people off, but I am not that sort of guy. I often think maybe I am too kind and maybe not selfish enough, if you look at the guys who have been successful they are often selfish and do only care about themselves on

and off the track and they don't care if they make a dirty move on the track. I sometimes think do I really have what it takes to be a champion, but then I look at somebody like Antonio Cairoli and he is a nice guy off the track and also on the track. With him when it comes down getting the job done he gets it done and you have to respect that. I think whatever works for you and I can live with who I am.

Motocross Illustrated: Is there anything you would change in your career or life?

Simpson: I don't think I would want to change anything, I am in a good place at the moment, and I am doing what I love. Maybe in the past I could have done something differently, the way I went about things, maybe I got too excited and went in



with the wrong mind set. I think I am a pleasant guy, I think I am a talented rider, maybe not as talented as some others, but I try and work hard and get the most out of who I am. I think as a fan that is the type of guy you like to follow. I am diehard and I will always be there giving 100%.

Motocross Illustrated: Seems to me for riders like yourself, or Rui Goncalves, or Evgeny Bobryshev or so many others that the sport is a rollercoaster. Injuries, wrong team selection, mentally being brought down from these things. What do you think?

Simpson: It is a rollercoaster, I came off a great year in 2008, fourth in the World and one of the favourites in 2009, but maybe I got too excited, I wouldn't blame anything on injury, but I won a

moto in Valkenswaard, then struggled to come back from a leg injury, then I had issues with my gluten tolerance and I was feeling tired after 10 minutes and coming off two bad seasons I couldn't get a ride in MX2 so I took a ride with LS Honda in MX1 and to be honest that was one of my worst years ever, the team didn't want to do what I wanted to do and the level of commitment from the team wasn't there and you can see that with other riders also having trouble with them, so it wasn't just me.

Motocross Illustrated: Looking at you at the start of 2012 I felt maybe you had found the right combination, with the team, you were fit and everything looked in place for a better year. What did you think of 2012?



Simpson: Coming into 2012 I felt great I had the chance to race for Yamaha, but I fell short of the mark and could have done a lot more, there have been highs and lows. I am 24 years old and have plenty of time left and there are new ways the races are being run and different tracks. I think top five in MX1 at the moment would be a great position.

Motocross Illustrated: Another thing is you probably could have done with another year or two in MX2, with you still being rather young.

Simpson: For sure, I don't agree with the age rule, it is making the MX2 class less competitive. We have a lot of good guys coming into the MX1 class, but you had guys in the past like Chiodi, or Guarneri, or Rui of myself, guys like that who were always good in MX2 had moto wins and podiums, but they had to move to MX1 not because they wanted to, but because they had to. I feel I am a good MX1 rider and I ride the MX1 bike well, but saying that I wouldn't count out going back to MX2 if the rule was changes back. I mean both classes would be stacked and good riders can't even get a ride in MX1 now because the MX1 class is so stacked with really good riders. A lot of guys have had to leave the Grand Prix scene and with the fly-aways it's gotten expensive. You can see guys like Barragan and Leok racing in Europe and those are good GP riders.

Motocross Illustrated: The MX2 class is pretty limited of experienced talent this year, apart from maybe four or five guys there are a lot of MXGP rookies.

Simpson: I think MX2 might end up being a little like a European class. If you look at the MX2 class this year there isn't really anyone who can run with him, I mean Tommy has moved up, Roelants has moved up, Van Horebeek, that leaves Jake (Nicholls) and Tonus to fight with him. We will see if these two have what it takes to step up to his level in 2013. I think the 2014 World MX2 Champion might end up being a guy who has been running 15th in 2011, and then you have a guy like Herlings who is just 18 or 19 and he has to move up to MX1. When my dad was riding you went to MX1 when you were early 30s.

Motocross Illustrated: Back to your current situation. You really had to wait a while to get a ride

for 2013. How was that, having finished just outside the top ten in the World and you were not sure you had a ride?

Simpson: It is not a good feeling, it is frustrating and also daunting, I am 24 years old and finished 11th in the MX1 Championship points, just missed the podium by a point or two, finished top five in some races, top ten a lot of times and then to be maybe looking at not having a ride at all, or being in the hat with a bunch of riders for maybe two teams that were left. I was thinking how can this be. Your chances are limited, do you look at riding just the British Championship, or maybe look for something in Australia, or maybe America, it was pretty scary.

Motocross Illustrated: I know you still want to be a



World Motocross Champion in the GP series.

Simpson: At the end of the day this is where I have been brought up, this is the championship I want to do and at some point you start thinking, wow I might not be able to do it and I am only 24 years old. Guys like Rui, Guarneri, Strijbos, these guys are struggling to get good rides and struggling to make a living doing it. At the end of it you might be sitting on the start line and have no salary, times are really tough and there is a lot to think about. At the end of the day you need a team and you have to sit on the start line and feel happy, and if everything goes like that you will produce your best results.

Motocross Illustrated: If I look at riders like Ben Townley and Christophe Pourcel who raced in America, had

a year or two where they made really, really good money, and then the recession came. Both those guys struggled to race for less money and it seems to me their concentration on the job at hand was not there anymore. How did you see that?

Simpson: I think so, at some point as a rider you think you need to make a stand, but at the end of the day you will have riders who will carry on riding for less money, so you can't make a stand, but unless you think, like somebody like Ben Townley who has had a lot of injuries, then obviously you need to call it a day. We need to ride out of this recession, but it is tough times, there is no getting away from that.

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GRAND PRIX OF THAILAND

The Grand Prix of Thailand is of course just a few weeks away and work on the facility and circuit are in full swing as the FIM World Motocross Championship is set to make its debut in the beautiful area of Pattaya, Thailand.

Event organizer Kraitos Wongsawan is as enthusiastic as any GP promoter you will find and has been involved in the sport for many years. Back in the 1980s his father promoted major Supercross races in Thailand and now Mr. Wongsawan is doing his best to make sure the FIM World Motocross Championship has found a vital stop in the calendar.

Motocross Illustrated: Thanks for your time Kraitos. Can you tell me a little about what you have been up to with the circuit and facility in the last months?

Wongsawan: The track is huge and we are making all the grandstands for the spectators also. The track is on the side of a hill. Viewing will be really nice and the track is made up from dirt and sand, it won't be sand like Lommel, but it will be soft, so not hard pack.

Motocross Illustrated: I've looked on the internet and it is clear this is a really beautiful area and very tourist friendly. What type of crowd do you expect, mainly Motocross fans or also a lot of the tourists from Pattaya?

Wongsawan: The weather is going to be warm, probably pretty hot and with it being in a

tourist area we are expecting something like 30,000 spectators, but we obviously need to look in this first year what is possible. We have a good Motocross following in this area and along with the regular fans we will also have many tourists from the area. Ticket prices are not expensive compared to normal prices, tickets are around 25euro, but for the locals we have to bring the prices down because everything is much cheaper in Thailand.

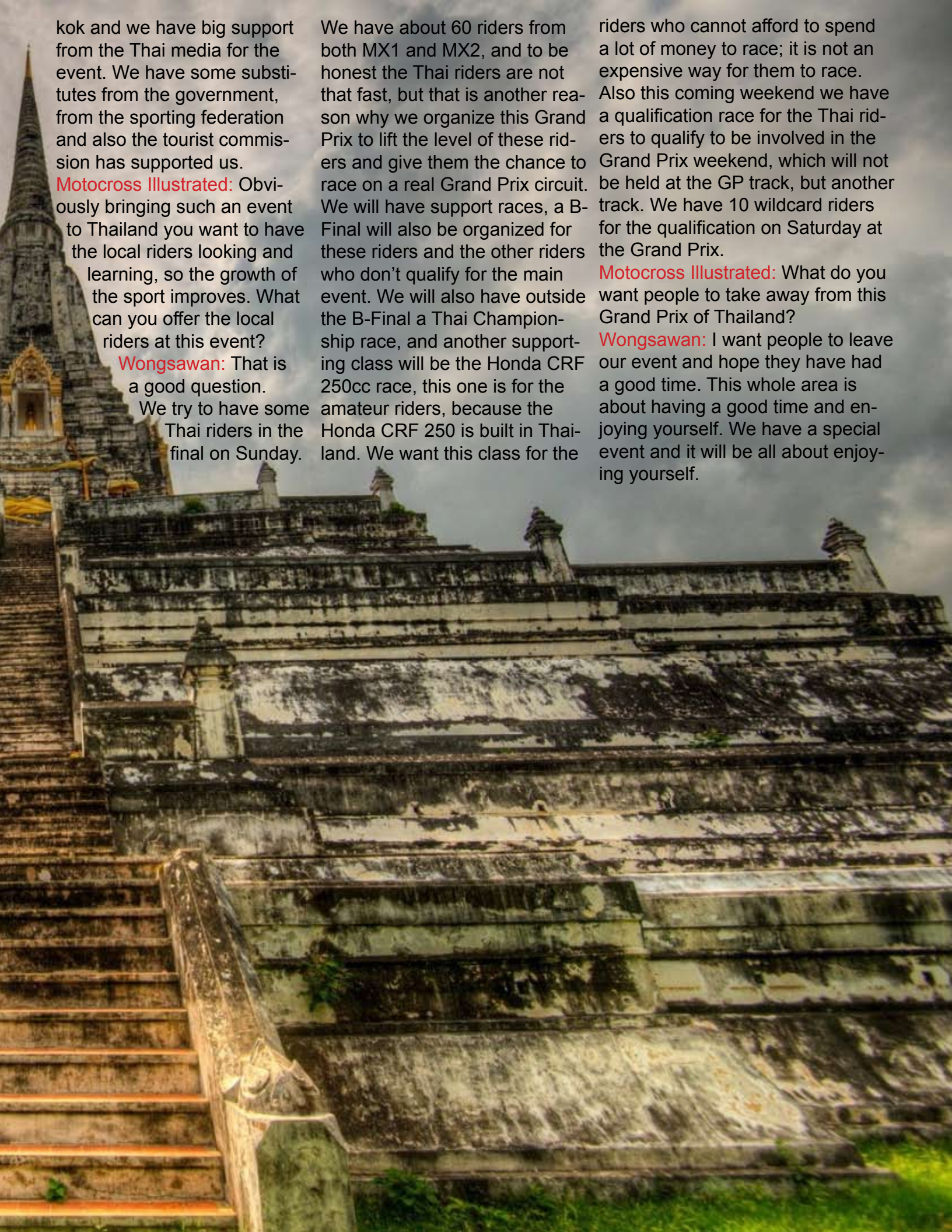
Motocross Illustrated: How will you attract the non-Motocross fans? What type of activities will you offer the spectators?

Wongsawan: Oh, this area is very much a holiday area, great beaches and people are always in a good mood here and happy. The real Motocross fans will come just for the Motocross and

we have had big events here in Thailand for Supercross and other Motocross events, there is a good fan base. We will also have a lot of activity here for the event, music, DJs, an attraction park type of entertainment for the children also for the adults. We have put in a lot of effort to make this a really big event as we also want to attract the tourists to Motocross.

Motocross Illustrated: What type of support have you from the Industry there, or maybe outside Sponsors?

Wongsawan: We have sponsors like McDonalds joining us, and many big name sponsors like DC shoes, we will have big vendor area with many shops and a lot of the industry is involved there. Media interest is very good. Next week we have the launching of the event in Bang-



kok and we have big support from the Thai media for the event. We have some substitutes from the government, from the sporting federation and also the tourist commission has supported us.

Motocross Illustrated: Obviously bringing such an event to Thailand you want to have the local riders looking and learning, so the growth of the sport improves. What can you offer the local riders at this event?

Wongsawan: That is a good question.

We try to have some Thai riders in the final on Sunday.

We have about 60 riders from both MX1 and MX2, and to be honest the Thai riders are not that fast, but that is another reason why we organize this Grand Prix to lift the level of these riders and give them the chance to race on a real Grand Prix circuit. We will have support races, a B-Final will also be organized for these riders and the other riders who don't qualify for the main event. We will also have outside the B-Final a Thai Championship race, and another supporting class will be the Honda CRF 250cc race, this one is for the amateur riders, because the Honda CRF 250 is built in Thailand. We want this class for the

riders who cannot afford to spend a lot of money to race; it is not an expensive way for them to race. Also this coming weekend we have a qualification race for the Thai riders to qualify to be involved in the Grand Prix weekend, which will not be held at the GP track, but another track. We have 10 wildcard riders for the qualification on Saturday at the Grand Prix.

Motocross Illustrated: What do you want people to take away from this Grand Prix of Thailand?

Wongsawan: I want people to leave our event and hope they have had a good time. This whole area is about having a good time and enjoying yourself. We have a special event and it will be all about enjoying yourself.

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IMAGE BY RAY ARCHER



ANTONIO CAIROLI

AND THIS NEW ADVENTURE

For Six-Times World Motocross Champion Antonio Cairoli something new is always exciting. When he moved to the Red Bull KTM Factory team a few years ago you could see the excitement in the eyes of the Italian when he arrived at the first Grand Prix of the season. The unknown is something that Cairoli enjoys and he does his best to take each and every challenge with 100% determination and enthusiasm.

When the Grand Prix riders head to Doha, Qatar in a couple of weeks time you can be sure Cairoli will make this experience one he will not forget. A new country to visit and a new format to test. Racing at night isn't something that bothers Cairoli and it will be the start of something new for him.

Motocross Illustrated: Antonio how is your training program going?

Cairoli: Just after New Year I started riding a little bit because I started later than normal. I didn't train after the des Nations for a couple of months. Then I started riding just two or three times in the week, then after the New Year I started the program.

Motocross Illustrated: I guess being in Sardinia you are not having too much trouble with snow and cold conditions?

Cairoli: No the weather here in the south is good. We don't have any problem with the cold or snow that you have in the North of Europe.

Motocross Illustrated: Are you looking forward to the night

race in Qatar?

Cairoli: For sure I am looking forward to that a lot. I mean it is a nice place I think, I have never been. I hope they make a nice track and I am sure it will be a nice race. It is good for Motocross to have races in places like this. It's a place where people go on holidays and I think it will be really good; I look forward to it a lot.

Motocross Illustrated: Nice that the weather will be good for a change. Something like 20 degrees in Qatar and 30 in Thailand.

Cairoli: That is great, it's nice to have good racing with good condition, better for everyone, the media, mechanics, riders, everyone.

Motocross Illustrated: Last year you ended the season on fire, totally dominating your competition. Is that your goal in 2013 to continue that form or go back to your normal strategy of just being good enough to get more points than your rivals?

Cairoli: My goal is to be World Champion and to be better than the year before. Last year my start of the season was no

so good, like the early Grand Prixes, but I was happy what happened in Sweden in some ways, because it made me more motivated and I wanted to do really well. For sure this year I will try and be at my best for the first round of the championship.

Motocross Illustrated: Can Jeffrey Herlings race with you or even beat you in the combined races?

Cairoli: I don't know, for sure, I think the 250 bike is a really strong bike and in some races for sure it will be possible, to be with the MX1 guys and it's possible.

Motocross Illustrated: What do you think of the combined races between MX1 and MX2?

Cairoli: I think is ok, I mean we will see. I don't know what to think at the moment, at the first race we will see how it goes, it is a new thing and for the crowd it can be more interesting. In one way it is sometimes boring for some spectators watching three or four hours of Motocross on television, so in some ways it is better to focus on the one big class and some TV will make it good.



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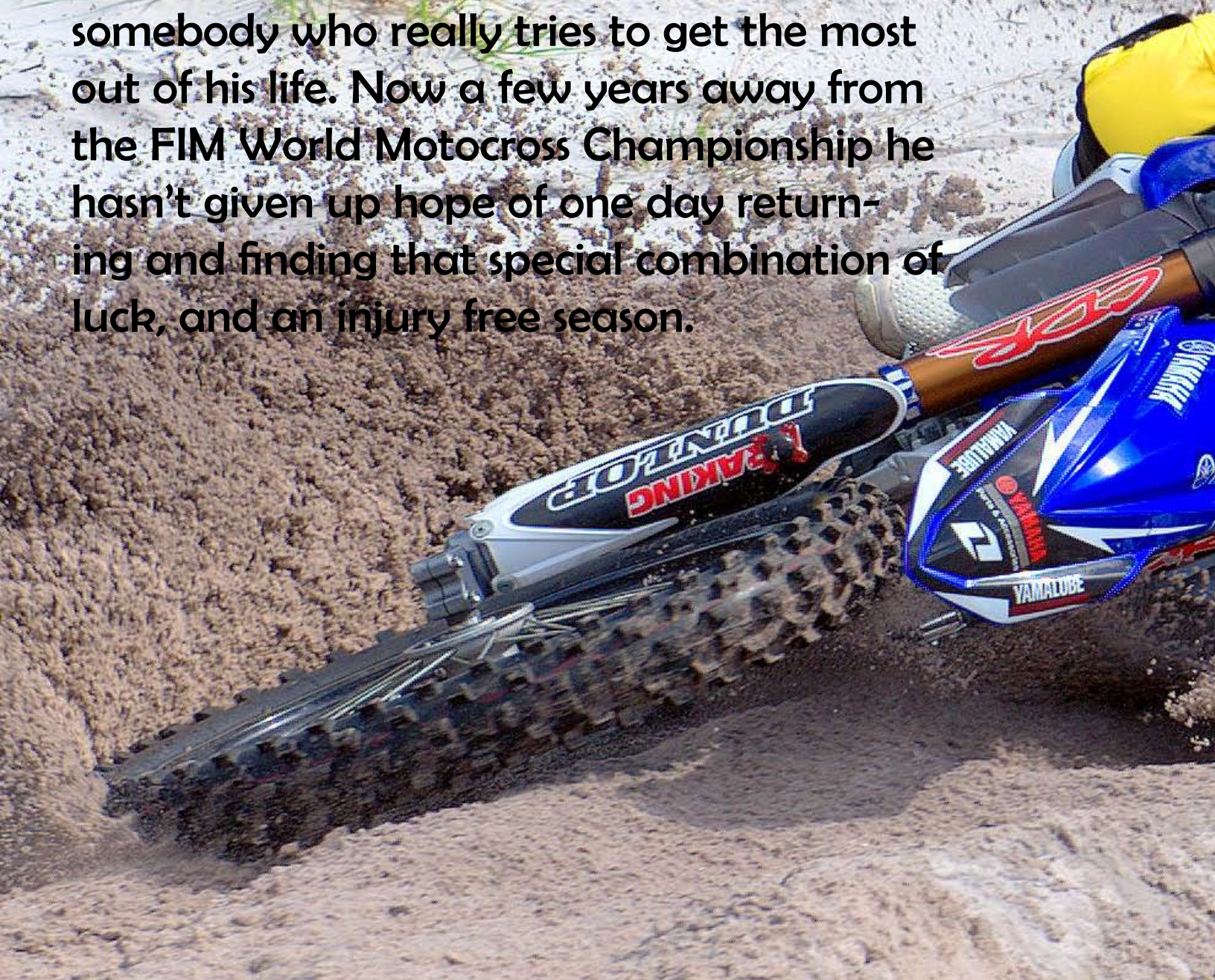
2 STROKE

BILLY MACKENZIE

STILL CHARGING DOWN UNDER

STORY GEOFF MEYER IMAGES JOHNNY DOUGLAS HAMILTON

I always liked Billy Mackenzie. He was and still is a say it how it is type of guy and somebody who really tries to get the most out of his life. Now a few years away from the FIM World Motocross Championship he hasn't given up hope of one day returning and finding that special combination of luck, and an injury free season.



THE
ORDER



Mackenzie continues to live down in Australia and despite not really showing his best form the Scotsman has continued to have the respect of the Australian Industry. Recently signed up by the Craig Dack Yamaha team Billy Mac is working hard to finally get a real crack at the Australian Motocross Championship.

Motocross Illustrated: First how is life in OZ, you still living the dream there? What type of set-up do you have and are the thoughts of staying on to live there still in your mind?

Billy Mackenzie: Day to day living in Australia is for me 100% better than living in the UK. Weather and traffic are the main things that make me grateful for living here. Yes I guess in some ways you could say that riding motocross here is dream like. Where I live is pretty tropical, so when there are heavy dumps of rain during the night you know that riding will be amazing the next day and it happens quite often. There is always a far better chance that the weather is going to be hot and sunny and where I ride is only a stone's throw from the ocean, so after an afternoon of moto's it literally only takes 5 mins drive before I'm in the ocean! It's those times when I think to myself, 'this is awesome!' When comparing it to a drive round the M25 to go riding in the rain it starts to make sense to me. At this moment in time, I'm so excited to be riding for CDR Yamaha and having a fully motivated team behind me. I'm really happy and in a good place with everything around me to possibly be at my best, so the goal right now is to work hard and try winning some races. I love living and racing in Australia at the moment but never know where I could end up!

Motocross Illustrated: Still remember you running around in 4th place in that French GP way back in 2000. That is 14 years ago. How you feeling about the sport, still motivated and enjoying it?

Billy Mackenzie: That was 2000 Geoff, if we're talking about the same race that Nunny went 1-1? My first GP was Hanchen in Germany when Langston went 1-1 for his first overall. But to answer your question, I still enjoy racing when I'm doing well..... when I'm struggling with setup, injuries or fitness I don't enjoy it! At the moment I'm building things up very gradually after such a terrible year, but I'm enjoying seeing the improvements each week and it's giving me fresh motivation for the season ahead. It's nice to have a bit of time before the season so it's not as stressful trying to hit targets too soon. I feel very relaxed and focused at the moment, I've not had to think about anything regarding set up or riding, the team has took care of everything for me and it's a huge weight of my shoulders.

Motocross Illustrated: How is everything coming along with the new team and bike?





I heard the Yamaha is set up pretty well due to Josh doing a lot of testing?

Billy Mackenzie: I really can't say enough good things about CDR and the bike, and that's not even me being media friendly! CDR have fully taken me under their wing and I am truly grateful after having such mediocre results since being in Australia. Josh has set the bike up almost perfectly, I haven't had to do much at all, very similar to when I joined CAS Honda and jumped on the bike he had set up, he knows his stuff! It's a hard thing to emigrate and I guess I did it without even planning it! So now that I have learnt the good from the bad and got my Australian stripes, to join the top team with the best infrastructure is a dream come true, so I'm going to do everything I can to bring back the old Billy Mac and win races.

Motocross Illustrated: You have been over there for a few years now. Some bad luck and injuries, but how would you see the time you have spent there?

Billy Mackenzie: I guess in hindsight it would have been nice to know a few more details and had some better guidance, but that's all part of the adventure I guess. I've had a mad time and met a lot of good people, people I would never have met by staying home.... Obviously! I've seen the other side of the planet and some beautiful places, I could list so many positive things since living in Australia and tell so many fun story's so I definitely have to regrets and I look at everything as something to learn from and I feel it's made me a better human being.

Motocross Illustrated: Watching the Aussies at the MXoN this year they seem to have some good riders. Who do you think stands out and does anyone over there have the potential to be a GP rider?

Billy Mackenzie: Always a tricky question Geoff! I think Dean Ferris will fly the flag for the Aussies this year, so look for him to do well and judge the Aussie riders off him.

Motocross Illustrated: How is the industry with the recession hitting Australia last year? Are times tough or is it still a good place to be?

Billy Mackenzie: It's very similar to the GP's, if you're not at the top end of the results then for some it is a struggle. Australia is a huge place so for privateer teams, travel is expensive and that has a knock on effect to the championship like any other. Living in Australia is very expensive but it's the price you pay to minimize the stress of your day to day routine. There are lots of opportunities and the Australians as a nation are a great bunch, they all stick together and help each other out. There's not really a lot to worry about when the weather is nice and the roads are clear, people are genuinely a lot happier!

Motocross Illustrated: Any chance of you being at the GP of Thailand or some races in Europe in 2013?

Billy Mackenzie: This is something I will have to ask Craig Dack but I guess it all depends on how

my results are and what's going on over here. I would love to race in Thailand seeing as it is the closest one to me, I think racing a GP there would be a lot of fun. If I were to try make any other GP's, I would like to do Matterley Basin again, but I've already checked and it's in-between 2 of the Aussie MX nationals, so it would be a bit of a hectic travel schedule and I need to focus on the Australian Championship first.

Motocross Illustrated: Checking out the 2013 GP calendar with a night race, mixed classes and races in Thailand, Brazil, Qatar and Mexico, what do you think of the way the series looks at the moment?

Billy Mackenzie: It's sounding pretty hectic! I would be hating life if I was riding a 250 against the big bikes; it's not fun sitting behind the roost for 40mins! It will be good for spectators but there will be a lot of drama going on with riders in the different classes getting in each other's way. I love the idea of night races though, that could be something I could get into! The series is looking amazing, the presentation of the tracks and the pits look very professional although some of the tracks look very disappointing to ride and race.

Motocross Illustrated: Ben Townley is probably going to be the guy to beat again in 2013 if he stays fit. Have you checked your speed against his yet, do you ever see him around, or some of your rivals?

Billy Mackenzie: I haven't seen Ben ride yet, but will see him soon at the first round of the NZ championship along with a few others. I don't see many of my rivals around, everyone is pretty spaced out over Australia so you only ever see them at the races which is kind of nice. I prefer to just focus on my own riding and make sure I'm feeling my best on the bike, and usually when that happens I ride my best.

Motocross Illustrated: Missing anything about Europe?

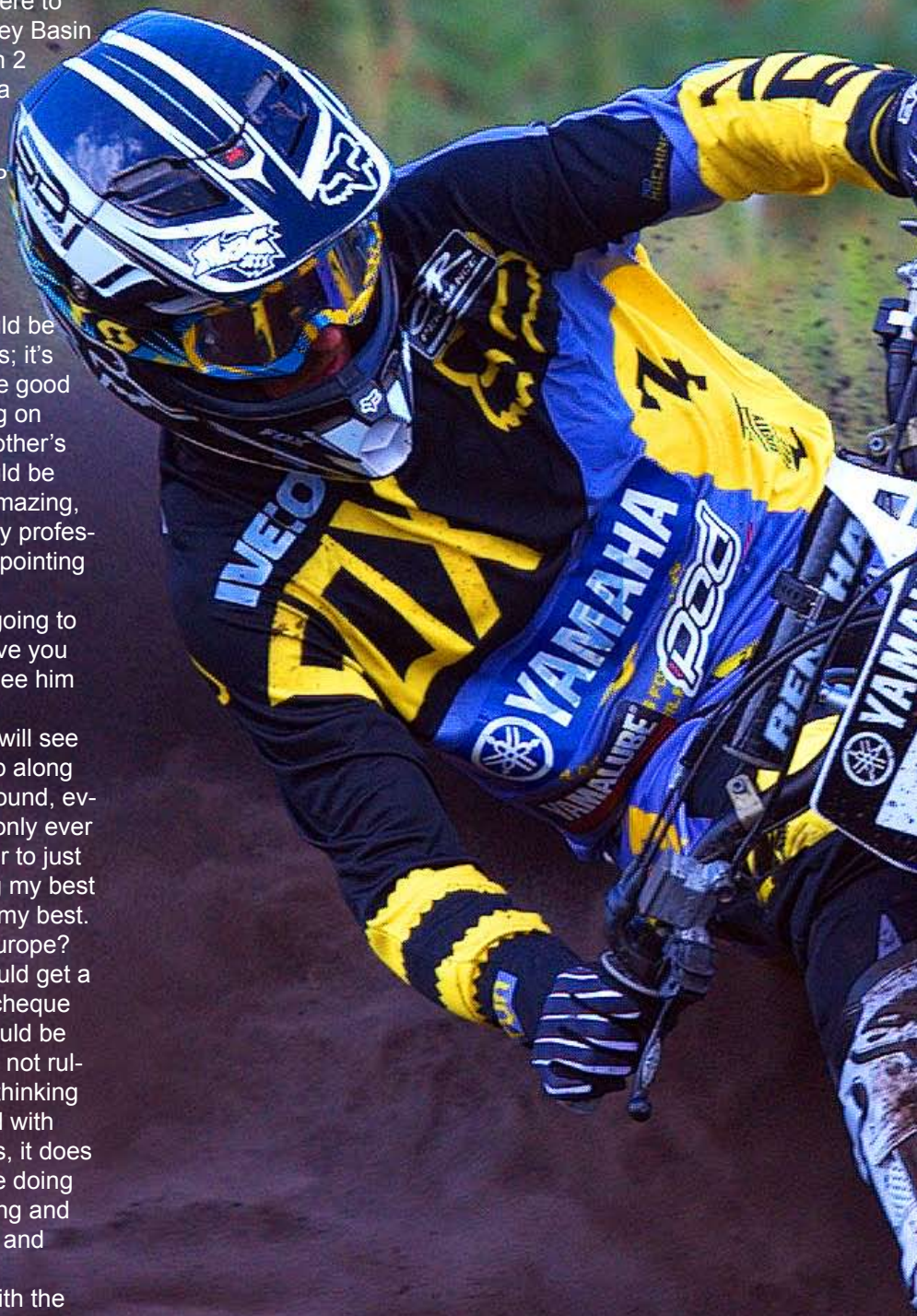
Billy Mackenzie: If I thought about it I'm sure I could get a list of things I miss about Europe, mainly the pay cheque for being at the top end of the championship, it would be nice to have one of them again and something I'm not ruling out just yet. Apart from that I don't find myself thinking about it too often. I miss my friends and family and with the championship going new and wonderful places, it does make me think about how fun the travel used to be doing the GP's, but as much fun as it was it was also tiring and hectic and something you have to be prepared for and have the funds to do it properly.

Motocross Illustrated: Do you keep up to date with the Grand Prix scene and British scene. Maybe watch the races online?

Billy Mackenzie: No I don't, I'm sure I would be into it if I did, but I normally just catch up after the weekend and check the results online. I haven't followed the British scene for a while, I follow my friends on twitter and they always keep me up to date on their results so that's the most important things for me.

Motocross Illustrated: Any offers to come back to UK?

Billy Mackenzie: I had one last year but I just really didn't want to come back! It was literally the only offer I had and if CDR didn't pick me up I may have been without a ride, but I took a chance and waited it out here in Australia and things fell into place, so I'm very lucky and intend to do everything I can to get back on track, then who knows what can happen in the future.







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